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Briefly Noted

We call attention to an article from Die Welt (Hamburg, Germany) which appeared in the 1 June Press Comments, and to articles from the Frankfurt Allgemeine Zeitung and the American Daily Worker (by Victor Perlo) appearing in the 6 June Press Comments. These articles refer to an East-West meeting of economists which met at Kiel, Germany, from 5 to 9 March, to discuss the economic effects of disarmament. A classified report has indicated more clearly than these articles do that the Soviet economists firmly asserted that disarmament would not mean serious depression and unemployment in western capitalist countries. This is a reversal of an old Soviet propaganda position, according to which capitalism could only thrive when it had an active arms industry. The meeting is of course no longer news, but the fact that the Communists have given up the argument that the capitalists cannot afford to disarm should be kept in mind in future discussion of the disarmament problem.

According to the Associated Press, a dispatch from Vientiane reports that a French Missionary was killed by the Pathet Lao on 11 May while he was on his way to say mass at Na-tum. We take this to be but further proof, if any is needed, to show that the Pathet Lao are outright Communists who are already carrying out standard Communist policy and procedures in the area controlled by them and that, contrary to their claim that Laos should be a neutral state, they have every intention to turn the country into a Communist state in which all forms of religion will be abolished.

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391. The Soviet "Troika"

Background: At the UN General Assembly meeting in the fall of 1960, Khrushchev proposed that the office of UN Secretary General be replaced by a triumvirate, to be composed of one Communist, one western and one neutralist member, each one to have veto rights. At the same session he also proposed adding five neutralist members to the ten-nation disarmament commission, in effect making that body also a tripartite group (five members for each bloc). In March 1961, at Geneva, the Soviets also demanded the application of the three-man principle for the inspection apparatus in any nuclear test ban agreement. Neutral nations at the UN have suggested, both last fall and this spring, a compromise under which the Secretary General would have three deputies (western, Communist, and neutralist) but the Soviets, still trying to topple Hammarskjold's office itself, rejected this (as did the US) presumably because it would not afford a veto right. The idea of a veto is also cropping up in the Laotian negotiations. The tripartite International Control Commission was first established back in 1954, with western (Canada), Communist (Poland), and neutral (India) members, but in its first incarnation decisions were by majority vote; now the Soviets demand unanimity (i. e., a veto right for Poland). Further, the ICC is only to act when instructed to do so by both chairmen (British and Soviet) of the Geneva Laos Conference. It is becoming quite apparent that the Soviets intend to prevent any individual from exercising an international authority not subject to their veto; as Khrushchev told Walter Lippmann (a remark since echoed in Soviet propaganda), "while there are neutral nations, there are no neutral men." This statement is of course consistent with dialectical materialism -- at least as regards the men.

Evidently the Soviet introduction of neutrals as a third group is only a smoke screen, intended to mislead neutral opinion and to enlist neutral support. The neutrals' own proposal for deputy secretaries general does not suit the Soviets, neither are they satisfied with the old ICC procedure. Gromyko's veto as a co-chairman of the Geneva Laos Conference does not even have a tripartite background. In short, the essence of the proposals is the veto right itself.

Now, the Soviet demand for (and where possible, exercise of) a veto right is nothing new, but what is now proposed is not merely a substantive veto on major policy questions, which they already have, but a built-in administrative veto on daily operations. Unlike a veto in the UN Security Council, for which the USSR must assume full responsibility in the light of world publicity, an administrative veto could be exercised continuously, without attracting attention or providing any clear-cut occasions when the world could say, "Thus far and no farther." Inspection teams might be actively moving about, creating an illusion of security and international control, but the Communists could prevent a team from moving behind a hill where a Pathet Lao ammunition dump was hidden, or into an area where Soviet nuclear testing was going on. Communist members could continuously obstruct and delay, and they could also blackmail the west, raising new demands and conducting still further obstruction until these demands were met. Effective international action has been a problem for the USSR; in

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the Suez, Lebanon, and Congo crises, the UN intervened to pacify dangerous situations, and such pacification defeats the Soviet policy of fishing in troubled waters and exploiting fears of war to force concessions, a policy cloaked by the name "co-existence." Under the system they are now proposing, however, the USSR could support the UN on many cold-war questions, confident that any actual UN activities could be rendered harmless to them, or warped to support their programs.

Perhaps Khrushchev believes that the time has come when he can turn international organizations into mere facades, separate neutrals from the west, and force the west to bow to his will. But the neutrals, such as Ghana, India, Yugoslavia, and Burma, opposed Khrushchev's proposal for replacing the Secretary General's office last fall, and he seems to have made no new non-Communist converts since then. The neutral nations have a greater stake in the UN than the members of the eastern and western alliance systems, and they appear to recognize Khrushchev's proposals for what they are, an attempt to break down international organization, and a refusal to recognize international authority.



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392. Democratic Reform in Latin America - The Venezuelan Land Reform

Background: Throughout Latin America the words "Reforma Agraria" (Agrarian Reform) are an almost magic phrase that denotes the aspirations of the rural people for a better life. Frequently, the complexity of the subject is overlooked, sometimes deliberately. Communist and Castro agitators give the subject a simple meaning - the breaking up of large estates and the destruction of the traditional upper classes, identified as the collaborators with "Yankee imperialism." The agitators' handbook of the Colombian Communist party, entitled: What Is and For What Does the Communist Party Fight? puts the matter into a disarmingly simple catechism. "Colombia is a rich country but the people of Colombia are poor. Who are the ones responsible for the misery of the people. The responsible persons are the powerful North American financiers, the owners of the large estates (los latifundistas) and the big merchants (los grandes empresarios). Of the eight million people who live in the farming regions, only eight thousand own the land. These eight thousand owners of large estates (latifundia) enrich themselves everyday from the work of the other more than seven million persons who live in the farming areas."

The Venezuelan agrarian reform program is an outstanding example of a democratic approach to the difficult problems of agrarian reform. It undertakes to give land to the landless, and, hence, answer the Communist agitators' charge with appropriate action. More importantly, it recognizes the futility of this over-simplified solution and seeks to develop the vital ancillary social improvements that will make the program successful in improving living standards and agricultural productivity. These activities include, building of roads, houses, schools, water lines and sewers, the provision of agricultural credits, the provision of technical agricultural advice, and the planning of a national marketing program.

The Venezuelan agrarian reform law was passed on 5 March 1960. The first article defines as its objective: "...the transformation of the agrarian structure of the country by incorporating the rural population into the economic, social and political development of the nation, through the substitution of the latifundism system by a just system of ownership, tenancy and exploitation of the land, based on an equitable distribution of the same, the adequate organization of credit, and an integrated assistance for the agricultural worker..." Since the law was passed, over one million hectares of land have been distributed to more than 30,000 heads of families of the formerly landless peasant class. It is hoped that, at this rate, the task of land distribution will be completed in four years. Of the land distributed, 150,000 hectares were purchased by the government from the holders of large estates, the balance of the land distributed was either government land or land confiscated from officials of the former dictatorship under the terms of the illicit enrichment laws passed to deal with these individuals. In this period of time, production of basic crops, corn, beans, yucca, etc., has increased markedly. Because the purpose of the law was not only to distribute land to the landless but to change the absentee landlord system that had been retarding production, this result is particularly gratifying. The results in one

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production was 250,000,000 tons and that for 1960 was 640,000,000 tons. Although the distribution of land has out-run the development of the ancillary improvements, noted above, progress is being made in housing, road building, and rural credit to peasants rose from 51,000 loans in 1959 to 108,000, in 1960. Venezuelan officials realistically point out that agrarian reform will not be completed in one year or even ten years, citing the example of Mexico. However, they are well on the way to achieving the kind of democratic social revolution Mexico achieved in the 1920's and 1930's. Most importantly, they are demonstrating the vitality of democratic society in Latin America.



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393. Portuguese Africa

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Background: The component territories comprising Portugal's 500-year-old empire in Africa are: Angola, Mozambique, Portuguese Guinea, Sao Tome, and Principe and the Cape Verde Islands (Madeira, although it is nearer to Africa than to Europe, is not considered an overseas territory). The population of the first three (the others are governed by Portuguese law and citizens possess all the rights - such as they are - of Portuguese citizens) are divided into two categories: nao-indigenas (non-natives) and indigenas (natives). The first group is governed like and has rights similar to other Portuguese in the metropole or in overseas territories; the indigenas, however, a totally negroid majority, are governed by tribal custom; possess none of the rights of Portuguese citizens and, furthermore, suffer from economic and social discrimination and can be made subject to forced labor. The determination of the Portuguese to maintain their colonial empire is defended largely by stating that the components are an integral part of the nation, hence not an empire and not subject to UN decision. They consider their overseas possessions to be their heritage from Prince Henry the Navigator, an unalienable national patrimony, and they take great pride in possessing what has become the largest remaining empire outside of Communist territory. They consider that the relinquishment (e.g., like Britain or France) of their empire would reduce Portugal to the status of an insignificant European state and would be ruinous to the economy. Their answer to the problem of the assimilation of the indigenous peoples is the assimilado, a status which is exceedingly hard for an uneducated nao-assimilado to attain, and even if he does succeed in doing so, he is still subject to social and economic discrimination. The Portuguese contend that the disorder in their African possessions is solely the result of outside interference and that the posture of the US government in Africa has stimulated and encouraged the developments there. They also insist that in so doing the US has turned its back on a NATO ally. They contend that they will make no reforms while under pressure. It is barely possible - Salazar, the dictator of Portugal, is 71 - that Portugal may do something to alleviate the hardships endured by the nao-assimilados. But the strong Portuguese reaction to the US vote in the UN favoring development of the Portuguese colonies toward independence is an indication that this is unlikely. At the recent conference held in Monrovia a mild resolution demanding African support only for "autonomy" for Angola was passed. This was in keeping with other resolutions passed at the same conference, which was dominated by moderate leaders of Africa. Although continued Portuguese rule is likely for the immediate future, for months past signs of unrest and dissatisfaction have been growing, particularly in Angola. The Portuguese have been re-inforcing armed forces to suppress the resistance. The major threat to Angola seems likely to come from Angolan insurgents under direction of the UPA in southwestern Congo and the Portuguese enclave of Cabinda, which is surrounded on three sides by the two Congo Republics. And even with the present chaotic situation in the Congo there is considerable evidence that some arms are filtering thence into Angola and there are some indications that Soviet arms with an unknown destination are being stockpiled in Ghana. Terrorist activities

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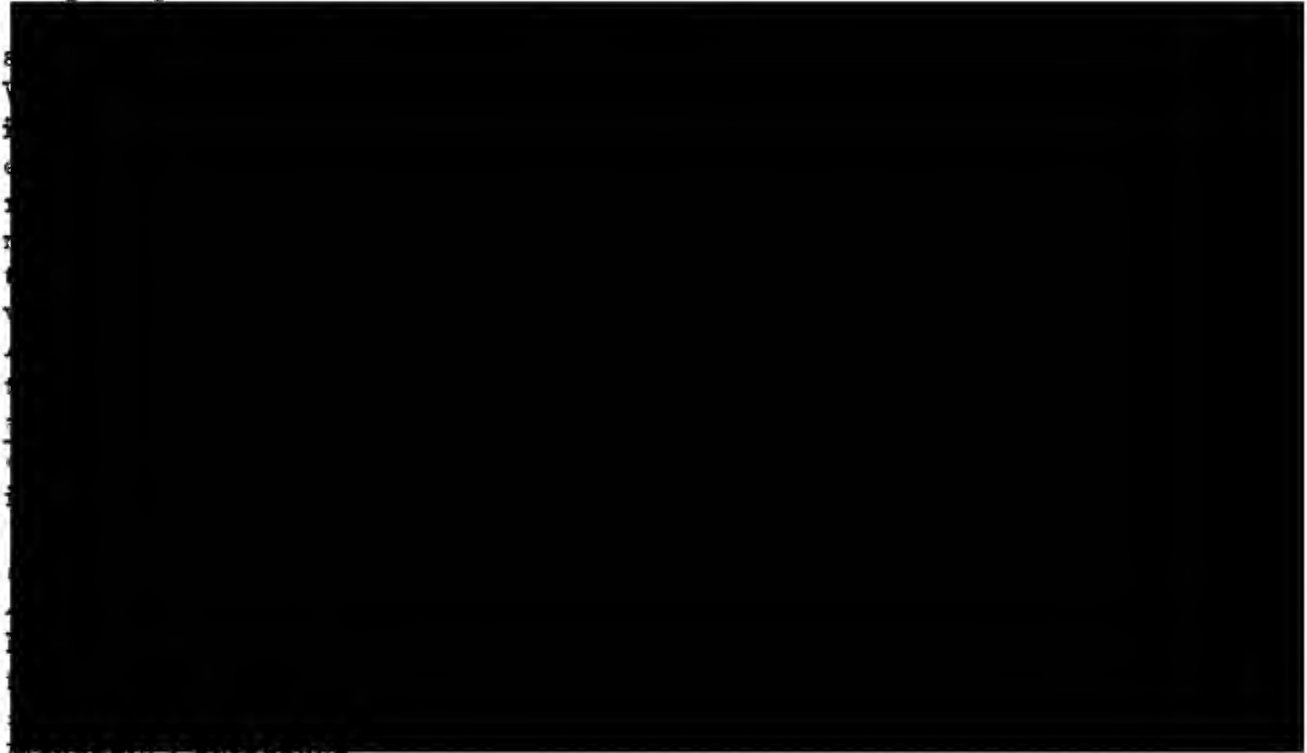
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aimed at Angola on at least a limited scale appear to be under direction of Angolans from Leopoldville.

FYI: Thus far, at least 5,000 persons (approximately 1,000 whites and about 4,000 negroes) have been killed in the Angola disturbances - more than in the Congo Republic and South Africa combined.



Monrovia Conference.

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394. The Soviets Exploit Cybernetics

Background: The Soviet leaders claim that Marxism-Leninism is itself a science, and they like to identify themselves with science in general. This has obvious propaganda advantages: science enjoys great prestige the world over, and those who link themselves with this prestige can hope to share the glory. But the Soviet government also sees science as a means of directly furthering their power. Physics and chemistry provide the basis for new rockets and bombs; biology is essential for bacteriological weapons. And the Soviets also concern themselves with the possibility of applying science to the manipulation of human beings. In this connection they have been especially interested in the possibilities of cybernetics. "Cybernetics" is a term coined in 1947 by Norbert Wiener and other western colleagues, and is derived from the Greek for "steersman." The term is also related to our word "governor," in the sense of a device for automatically controlling the speed of a machine. Cybernetics may be defined as that body of theory concerned with the regulation of complex systems; in other words, it is the science of control. Wiener's own specialty is mathematics and computer design, but he was in close contact with a group of medical scientists and he became convinced that systems of control are similar in the physical and biological worlds; he believed that these similarities had hitherto been overlooked mainly because of the professional lines which separate specialists in, say, physiology, from, say, physics. Cyberneticists hold that living organisms -- and, many of them would add, societies -- have devices which, like the governor on a steam engine, or like a thermostat, make them self-regulating, and which keep them operating in the most efficient manner. There may be complicated variations in the forces or impulses entering into these devices or control systems, and these forces or impulses (called "inputs" in the trade) may interact in highly complex ways, but the cyberneticist believes that in principle he can analyze these variables and describe them, using the terms and techniques of modern mathematics. Furthermore, when the variables in one system are understood, this understanding may be applied to other systems with like variables.

In practice, the cybernetic approach has gained much of its impetus from the development of complicated computers, or "mechanical brains." (Wiener's own thinking was influenced by his World War II experience in devising anti-aircraft fire-control apparatus which was intended to direct the AA guns, as a duck-hunter directs his shotgun, to a point where the target was expected to be.) To develop better computers it was necessary to understand complicated workings of the human brain, and to learn more about the latter. To make a machine with a mind like a man, one must regard the mind as being like a machine itself, and analyze and describe it in the same kind of terms. In the cybernetic approach, the mind is no longer regarded as a closed "black box" or as a bucket for receiving impressions, but as a system which can be understood -- and directed.

The development of computers is very important to a country which is interested in developing its industry and modern weapons, all the more so when, as in the case of the USSR, there is a labor shortage (partly due to war losses and partly to low efficiency). In actual fact, models based upon brain activity have been employed in the USSR as in this country to control automatic rubber

and chemical plants. The Soviets are using computer-oriented methods even more broadly in economic planning and development, which the Soviets now refer to as the science of economic cybernetics. Comprehensive state economic planning presents many problems which are solved automatically in a free supply and demand economy, and the Soviet planning apparatus has never been adequate to meet them -- hence the shortages, the distribution problems, the bottlenecks. The need for advanced computation methods to make Soviet planning work creates a sort of forced draft on Soviet cybernetics in general.


From these uses of cybernetics, the question arises: "What is its applicability in controlling society?" The Soviets recognize that mathematical tools are not yet sufficiently sophisticated, and that social activity has not yet been sufficiently described in measurable terms to make a legitimate science of social cybernetics possible. Wiener himself has expressed doubts about the feasibility of such a science, although some American socialists are confident that it can ultimately be done. The task of mathematical modeling and computer simulation is much more difficult than in the case of, say, biologic cells, and there too, success has not been fully achieved. Nevertheless, diversity and heterogeneity in Soviet society might well be viewed in cybernetic terms, like the frictions in economic planning, as perturbations in the system which dissipate energy, curtail output, detract from maximally efficient operation, and generally induce disharmony or entropy (i. e., lost motion). As with economic planning, the very failures of Soviet society encourage the elaboration of new remedies; the western social system can safely contain and even profit from diversity, while the Soviet system must suppress it or perish.

One great problem in applying cybernetics in a society is that of isolating and controlling the inputs, of creating laboratory-like conditions. The Soviets have found that only so much can be accomplished with the grown generation through either persuasion or coercion, and that they cannot induce acceptance of Communist ethics, morality, and objectives by these methods. Although 42 years have passed since the Bolshevik Revolution, parents still pass on to their children "outmoded ideas," such as religion, a desire for private property, and a lack of interest in the Plan. Psychologists and educators, once nearly outlawed for unorthodox thought, have returned to positions of influence since the mid-fifties, and they argue that the way to produce a New Soviet Man, whose thought and behavior will be predictable and in tune with the "transition to communism," is to mold genuine belief at the earliest possible age. This is not a new idea -- Plato proposed something similar -- but the program can now be supported by experimental work, conducted on cybernetic principles. By controlling and directing the early ideas of the child, they hope to train him to control and direct himself in the desired direction. Minds would be like governors and thermostats, constructed and set to regulate themselves at the Communist speed and temperature. A number of institutes in the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences RSFSR conduct work in learning, cognitive processes, and character formation -- as well as investigation of the actual electro-chemical modifications involved in information processing by the brain and nervous system. A. R. Luriya, for example, has demonstrated the importance of verbal control in establishing behavior patterns. One need not necessarily have controlled conditions to apply

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psychological methods and the Soviets may for example, be using psychological techniques in foreign propaganda. But by far the best opportunity to apply this work is that offered by the Soviet boarding schools, where it is possible to control to a high degree the child's environment during its formative years, "internalizing" the right ideas, such as the desirability of work. Thus human beings might be "programmed," like computers. What violations of human rights, aspirations, and individual choice this may involve are largely discounted.

Boarding schools have long existed in the USSR for displaced and orphan children, and in 1956 the party decreed their further extension for other children. There are now some 1300 such schools with enrollment upward of 600,000. The enrollment goal is 2 1/2 million by 1965, and Khrushchev and others have asserted without reservation that this will be the universal mode of education in the USSR in the Communist society of the future. Hitherto, these schools have not, by and large, been run on laboratory lines with highly trained staffs; many students have had free weekends, and only eight years have been covered. But a boarding school of a new, more complex type has recently opened at Smolensk, taking children at infancy, to be reared from cradle through secondary school. (See Press Comment, 17 May 1961). There are serious obstacles to be overcome: the needed refinement of scientific technique, the training of competent staff, and above all the placing of graduates in a non-laboratory world. When a product of the schools, taught that labor is noble, finds on the job that he does not share the privileges of party officials and technicians, he is likely to be more disoriented than if he had had a routine day school education. Moreover, it is doubtful that genuinely creative thinkers can be trained by these methods. As Wiener told a group of Soviet scientists, speaking of mechanical brains, it is possible to make them either "intelligent" or "obedient", but not both. If successful and universally applied, the Soviet methods would seem to be bound to culminate in something like Huxley's Brave New World -- a docile mass guided by a small elite, for the manipulators must necessarily stand outside the system. Cybernetics is itself a tool with many applications, and as such it is neither good nor bad. Most of this system of concepts originated in the West, and generally speaking Western behavioral science is ahead of Soviet. There are many humane applications of cybernetics as in the treatment of the handicapped. But the Soviet application is a betrayal of humanity.



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ADDENDUM

Item #394 - See Press Comment, 17 May 1961.

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